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Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

During the period under review, the Palestinian Authority issued its governmental programme outlining a forward-looking agenda to further strengthen the institutions of a future Palestinian State. Security and institutional reforms continued to be important elements to implement this agenda. The United Nations re-oriented its work to support Palestinian State-building efforts as a critical complement to the continued response to humanitarian needs.

The overall socio-economic and political situation remained challenging, despite notable economic growth in the West Bank prompted by Palestinian efforts and Israel's easing of closure. Intensive efforts by the international community did not result in the resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations or Palestinian unity. The political, administrative and economic rift continued to deepen between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Popular protests took place in the occupied Palestinian territory on a number of occasions. Donors disbursed approximately $1.35 billion to finance the recurrent budget of the Palestinian Authority. In November 2009 the Government of Israel announced a partial restraint on construction in the West Bank settlements for 10 months, which, however, excluded East Jerusalem. In Gaza, the closure continued and contributed to de-development

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and the erosion of the private sector. Key elements of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) remained unfulfilled. Despite recent positive steps to allow the entry of materials for some United Nations projects and a limited variety of goods for the private sector, Gaza's needs remain largely unmet.

The present report describes efforts made by the United Nations agencies, in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, donors and civil society, to support the Palestinian population and institutions.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 64/125, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its sixty-fifth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the implementation of the resolution, containing an assessment of the assistance actually received by the Palestinian people, of the needs still unmet and of the specific proposals for responding effectively to them. The reporting period is from May 2009 to April 2010.

2. Information on the living and socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian people is the focus of several reports prepared by other United Nations agencies, in particular, (a) the report of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (to be issued); and (b) the annual report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (A/64/13).

3. The humanitarian, economic and development needs of the Palestinian people are reflected in three key documents of the Palestinian Authority: (a) the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan for 2008-2010, which outlines the priority development needs in the governance, social, economic and private sectors, and infrastructure development worth $1.644 billion; (b) the Palestinian Authority's programme of the thirteenth Government, "Palestine: ending the occupation, establishing the State", which outlines the Government's two-year State-building strategy; and (c) "Palestine: moving forward, priority interventions for 2010", which is a bridging document between the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan and the next Palestinian National Plan, 2011-2013.

4. The United Nations assistance and support are outlined in three key documents. The consolidated appeals process for 2010, estimated at $664 million, outlines the United Nations and partners' humanitarian programmes. The medium-term response plan for 2009 and 2010 outlines the United Nations contribution to the national development and State-building efforts of the Palestinians as defined in the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan. UNRWA programme goals for the period 2010-2015 were reflected in the Agency's medium-term strategy. Financial requirements for the strategy were estimated at $675 million for 2010-2011, not including emergency relief interventions.

5. Throughout the year, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process continued to support United States and Quartet efforts for the resumption of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. The Office continued to ensure effective and improved coordination of assistance among the United Nations country team, the Palestinian Authority, the international community and the Government of Israel. The Office also continued to document the economic and social conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, and develop policies and programmes to improve them.

6. The present report provides an overview of the work of the United Nations, in cooperation with Palestinian, donor and civil society counterparts, to assist the Palestinian people and institutions, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/125. Also included is a summary of key political developments and

challenges relevant to the reporting period, as the international community works to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people, as well as to support the institution-building of the Palestinian Authority and the resumption of negotiations between the parties.

II. Overview of the current situation

A. Political context

7. On 4 June 2009, in his speech in Cairo, President Barack Obama of the United States of America reiterated the United States commitment to the two-State solution and called upon all players to live up to their responsibilities. On 14 June, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel endorsed the concept of a Palestinian State alongside Israel. On 26 June, the Quartet renewed its commitment to a two-State solution which would end the occupation that began in 1967 and called upon the parties to create the conditions for the prompt resumption and early conclusion of negotiations to resolve all permanent status issues, without preconditions. In this context, the Quartet called for the parties to implement their road map commitments. In an effort to further these objectives, Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas met on 22 September 2009 in New York under the auspices of President Obama.

8. On 24 November 2009, the Government of Israel announced a partial restraint on construction in the West Bank settlements for 10 months, which, however, excluded East Jerusalem. This was a step beyond previous Israeli positions but fell short of Israel's road map obligations to freeze all settlement activity. President Abbas announced that he would not stand in future Palestinian elections and reiterated his call for an Israeli settlement freeze as a basis for the resumption of negotiations. There were tensions in East Jerusalem as a result of settlement activity, house demolitions and the actions of extremists on both sides related to holy sites in the Old City. In the rest of the West Bank, there was violence between Israeli security forces and Palestinians, settler-related violence and riots following the decision of the Israeli Government, in February 2010, to place the Tomb of the Patriarchs/Ibrahim Mosque and Rachel's Tomb/Bilal Mosque on a list of Israeli heritage sites. The Palestinian Authority has expressed concern about the additional Israeli military orders (Order Nos. 1649 and 1650) to prevent illegal infiltration in the West Bank, which were put in effect on 13 April 2010.

9. In the absence of progress to resume direct negotiations, in February 2010 the United States offered to facilitate indirect talks between the parties. On 3 March 2010, the League of Arab States Follow-up Committee on the Arab Peace Initiative gave its support to Palestinian participation in indirect negotiations. However, following the announcement of construction of an additional 1,600 housing units in East Jerusalem on 9 March, which coincided with the visit to Israel by Vice-President Joseph R. Biden Jr. of the United States, the launch of the proximity talks stalled. On 19 March, the Quartet met, outlined its support for resumed negotiations and reiterated its call for the parties to implement their road map commitments. The Secretary-General visited Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory on 20 and 21 March to assess the situation on the ground, especially in Gaza, and to urge the parties to resume negotiations.

10. The internal Palestinian divide continues. In the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority has pursued with considerable success a State-building agenda and made visible progress in security reform. In Gaza, Hamas maintained de facto control and has assumed responsibility for most of the Government activities and public services. Egyptian efforts to achieve Palestinian reconciliation have produced several areas of common ground, but Palestinians remain divided over a number of security and political issues, reflected in Hamas' refusal to sign a reconciliation document proposed by Egypt following several rounds of intra-Palestinian negotiations and despite its acceptance by factions of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

11. In accordance with the Basic Law, President Abbas decreed that presidential and legislative elections be held throughout the occupied Palestinian territory in January 2010. However, they were not held owing to Hamas' insistence on national reconciliation before elections could be held in Gaza. In February 2010 the Palestinian Authority asked the Central Elections Commission to make arrangements for municipal elections to be held in July 2010.

12. In Gaza, key elements of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) remain unfulfilled, in particular a durable and sustainable ceasefire, intra-Palestinian reconciliation, opening of the crossings on the basis of the Agreement on Movement and Access between the Palestinian Authority and Israel of 2005, and the prevention of illicit trafficking in arms and ammunition. Hamas has increased its control over the population and the majority of institutions. Since January 2009, a de facto and uneasy calm has broadly been maintained between Gaza and Israel, but incidents of rocket fire and violence have continued. There has been little reconstruction of the destroyed civilian infrastructure and damage caused by Israel's military operation "Cast Lead" owing to the continued Israeli closure on a wide range of goods entering Gaza, especially construction materials.

13. The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip remains a priority for the United Nations, and the Secretary-General, who visited Gaza on 21 March, is personally engaged. His persistent efforts prompted Israel to allow the entry of glass, aluminium and wood, which made possible partial repair of houses with windows damaged during operation "Cast Lead", as well as construction materials for the United Nations projects on housing units in Khan Younis, a flour mill in El Bader and a sewage treatment facility in Tel el-Sultan.

14. Most goods now enter Gaza through tunnels between Gaza and Egypt, contributing to an underground economy regulated and controlled by Hamas and affiliated businessmen. Despite extensive mediation efforts and the provision of a "sign of life" in October 2009, a deal to secure the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit and Palestinian prisoners has not been achieved. Egypt continues to make efforts to combat smuggling and began in recent months to install underground metal sheeting along its border with Gaza. Concerns remain about the smuggling of weapons, including rockets.

B. Humanitarian and socio-economic context

Economic and fiscal developments

15. Real growth of the gross domestic product was estimated at 6.8 per cent for 2009, consisting of 8.5 per cent growth in the West Bank and 1 per cent growth in Gaza. Consumer price inflation fell from 7 per cent at the end of 2008 to around 4 per cent at the end of 2009. Growth in the West Bank was aided by the recovery of private sector confidence through the Palestinian Authority's reforms, especially in public finance and security areas. The partial easing of movement restrictions in the West Bank also contributed to this growth.

16. Despite improved economic growth, the 2009 unemployment rate in the West Bank and Gaza was 25 per cent. While there was no significant decline in the West Bank's unemployment rate in the first half of the year compared to the same period in 2008, it declined from around 20 per cent to 18 per cent in the second half of 2009. In Gaza the unemployment rate remained virtually unchanged at around 39 per cent, reflecting the lack of economic activity.[1]

17. The Government of Prime Minister Fayyad has continued with reforms in fiscal and monetary policy. The Palestine Monetary Authority has built upon progress achieved in 2007-2008 and moved closer to its medium-term objective of becoming a central bank. A strict Government employment policy has been followed and measures have been implemented to improve payment of utility bills. The Public Finance Management System has been strengthened further, which is helping to prioritize and raise the quality of spending. The wage bill of civil servants was also brought in line, while net lending, consisting largely of utility subsidies, was lower than budgeted owing to strict measures to improve payment of utility bills.

18. Economic activity in Gaza remained severely constrained by the persisting closure and resultant restrictions on capital inputs, raw materials and building supplies. This has led to a degradation in living conditions, impeded post-conflict private sector recovery and reconstruction efforts, and continues to fuel a process of de-development. As noted in paragraph 14 above, this has also led to a proliferation of tunnels, with an estimated 1,000 tunnels in operation at the end of the reporting period. The tunnels allow for the regular supply of many goods otherwise unavailable, including food, livestock, electrical appliances, furniture and fuel. Most of them are sold at lower prices and are of lower quality than those previously imported from Israel.

Humanitarian and socio-economic developments

19. Since the last reporting period,[2] 57 Palestinians were killed (45 in Gaza, 12 in the West Bank) and 1,058 were injured (156 in Gaza, 902 in the West Bank) by Israeli security forces, a significant decrease compared to the previous 12 months, when 1,505 fatalities and 6,923 injuries were recorded.[3] This difference is largely

[1] International Monetary Fund, "Macroeconomic and fiscal framework for the West Bank and Gaza: fifth review of progress". Staff report for the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, Madrid, 13 April 2010.

[2] Figures cover the period from 1 May 2009 to 13 April 2010.

[3] The figures are different from those reported in 2009, as at the time of publishing the 2009 report, organizations were still counting the number of civilians affected by operation "Cast Lead".

attributable to the Israeli military operation in Gaza in December 2008 and January 2009, during which 1,440 Palestinians were killed and 5,380 were injured. In addition, 44 Palestinians were killed and 70 were injured in internal fighting in Gaza only during the reporting period. Five Israelis were killed and 184 were injured during the reporting period, compared to 12 Israelis killed and 192 injured during the previous reporting period. Militants launched 91 rockets and mortar shells towards communities in Israel in the reporting period, as compared to over 2,000 in the previous period.

20. High levels of unemployment, food insecurity and aid dependency persisted, especially in Gaza and area C of the West Bank. While the basic daily food and humanitarian essentials were generally provided, the aid community was unable to respond effectively to the broader needs within the Gaza Strip owing to the ongoing closure. In the West Bank, movement and access obstacles, and a restrictive planning and related permitting process in area C, often prevented communities and humanitarian agencies from implementing humanitarian and development programmes. In addition, many communities in area C continued to be threatened by house demolitions and displacement. During the first quarter of 2010, 24 Palestinian-owned structures were demolished in area C, compared to 9 structures in the first quarter of 2009; thousands of other structures have pending demolition orders. The continued threat of demolitions is one of the factors creating high levels of tension in the West Bank, especially in East Jerusalem.

Movement, humanitarian access and operational space

21. The Israeli authorities continued to adopt measures to ease the movement of Palestinians between most Palestinian urban centres in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem. Currently, there are approximately 550 closure obstacles inside the West Bank, 80 fewer than at the beginning of the reporting period.[4] The Tarkumiya crossing opening hours for commercial goods were extended by three hours and tourist buses are allowed to move through the Jalameh vehicle crossing into the West Bank. The positive impact of these measures, however, has been offset in part by a steep increase in ad hoc "flying" checkpoints since December 2009 (the monthly average from October 2009 to January 2010 was 371, compared to 278 during the same period in the previous year). In addition to area C restrictions, access by Palestinians to and from areas behind the barrier, including East Jerusalem, and the Jordan Valley, as well as within the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron City, continued to be severely restricted.

22. In Gaza the closure contributed to the inability of the civilian population to engage in a meaningful recovery over a year since the conclusion of Israeli military operation "Cast Lead". While the approval of a number of key projects, as mentioned in paragraph 13 above, represents a positive first step, this falls short of the type of systemic change that will allow Gazans to begin to rebuild their lives. The majority of items allowed into Gaza from Israel through the official crossings continued to be food and hygiene items (85 per cent of imports since October 2009)

[4] They include 69 permanently staffed checkpoints, of which 37 are located along the barrier and used to allow Israelis to commute between Israel and the settlements, to allow access of limited numbers of Palestinians holding special permits to East Jerusalem and to Israel, and to allow access to and from small Palestinian communities isolated by the barrier.

in addition to some medical goods and educational material.[5] Medical referrals for Gaza's residents for external treatment continued to require permits issued by the Israeli authorities. In 2009, 30 per cent of applications were delayed and 2 per cent were rejected (in 2008, 37 per cent of applications were delayed and 3 per cent were rejected).

23. The Erez crossing point, the only passage for movement of people between Gaza and the West Bank via Israel, remained open to the majority of requests for the transit of humanitarian staff, with approximately 1,300 crossings every month. Except for bulk items through the Karni crossing conveyor belt, all goods destined for Gaza are transferred through the Kerem Shalom crossing. Problems resulting from the lack of capacity to transfer cooking gas resulted in shortages during the winter months, while a range of operational challenges, including reduced amounts of fuel entering Gaza, meant increasing periods of blackouts for Gaza City. The increased capacity of the tunnels led to greater amounts of benzene and reconstruction items to be transferred to Gaza. Nahal Oz was closed for the transfer of fuel as from 1 January 2010 except for one shipment in mid-January 2010; all fuel transfers have since occurred at Kerem Shalom.

24. Access and operational space for staff of humanitarian agencies remained restricted. From May 2009 to the end of January 2010, there were 526 reported incidents of delayed or denied access of United Nations staff at Israeli checkpoints, resulting in the loss of 4,687 staff hours, or 625 days. The majority of these incidents occur as United Nations staff cross the barrier on the Jerusalem periphery.

25. International and national non-governmental organizations in Gaza were subjected to pressure from the Hamas authorities, including requests to re-register, to provide staff lists and to share confidential financial data and beneficiary lists. In some cases, national non-governmental organizations were forced to close or have come under the direct control of the Hamas authorities.

26. In response to these challenges, a unit within the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat was created to address, on behalf of the Humanitarian Coordinator, these issues and to support the operations of the United Nations and international non-governmental organizations throughout the occupied Palestinian territory.

Barrier

27. Barrier construction within the occupied Palestinian territory continued despite the advisory opinion rendered by the International Court of Justice in July 2004. As of July 2009, 58.3 per cent (413 km) of the planned barrier of 709 km had been completed and 72 km of the barrier were under construction. The pace of construction has slowed. The United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, established pursuant to resolution ES-10/17, continued its outreach and claim intake activities, and completed its work in Jenin and Tubas governorates. Over 5,000 claim forms for registration of damages and 50,000 supporting documents were collected. Of continuing concern is limited access on the part of farmers to agricultural land

[5] Sales of goods are unregulated and items like medicine and live animals pose a threat to public health, including in Israel.

behind the barrier and the situation of those communities in the "seam zone" that face restricted access to health and education services.

III. United Nations response

28. The United Nations system continued to pursue an integrated political, humanitarian, recovery and development strategy. It continued to promote a negotiated permanent status agreement for a two-State solution, a durable Israeli-Palestinian peace and the implementation of road map obligations by the parties. The United Nations continued planning and implementing extensive humanitarian programmes, in particular in Gaza, and strengthened its support to Palestinian State-building efforts, making this an explicit goal of its policies and programming.

A. Human and social development

29. Humanitarian assistance was delivered throughout the occupied Palestinian territory. At the same time, the United Nations continued to implement programmes aimed at strengthening national institutions, systems and capacities for long-term social and economic development and self-reliance, and supported national efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This was done by providing technical assistance, advocacy, service delivery and partnership facilitation.

Education

30. UNRWA provided free school education to over 260,000 pupils in 325 elementary and preparatory schools in Gaza and the West Bank. Two thirds of these schools still operate on a double-shift system, including 90 per cent of UNRWA schools in Gaza. Consequently, children receive fewer hours of instruction and lack adequate access to teachers and facilities. In the West Bank, access restrictions are also hindering access to education, in particular for seam zone and area C residents.

31. UNRWA launched an education recovery plan in the West Bank, focused on reforms in curricula, teaching methods and remedial education. It included a tertiary education reform initiative aimed at promoting youth development and poverty alleviation. In Gaza, UNRWA began to implement a strategy to provide practical help to some 40,000 children with special needs in Agency schools. For the third year in a row, in Gaza, UNRWA implemented a six-week summer learning programme. Of the 39,600 students who participated, 62 per cent achieved basic numeracy and literacy for their level and were able to advance a grade.

32. The work of over 300 counsellors in UNRWA schools, health and social service centres, and community-based organizations, hired and trained through the community mental health programme, continued during 2009. The programme seeks to support refugee household coping mechanisms by addressing the psychosocial distress, emotional disturbance and behavioural cases caused to refugees by the prevailing violence and economic hardship.

33. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) contributed to the establishment of the Commission for Developing the Teaching Profession, which plays a key role in implementing the teacher education

strategy. UNESCO provides technical assistance to the Commission, as it sets and reviews national professional standards for teachers. It also supported the formulation of a framework for capacity development in educational planning and management aimed at enhancing the institutional planning and management capacity of the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Education and Higher Education. The World Bank's tertiary education project is contributing to improving the regulatory environment for the management, relevance and quality assurance of tertiary education.

34. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education continued their strategic partnership through the second phase of the women-run school canteen project launched in October 2009. The project will improve school health and nutrition of approximately 85,000 students by involving and supporting 28 women's centres and women's community-based organizations in the running of school canteens over the course of three years. A total of 230 school canteens and related income-generating initiatives will be created as sustainable economic enterprises.

35. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) worked with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to outline an early child development policy that will significantly expand access to preschool opportunities. UNICEF developed child-friendly kits, including educational toys and games, 200 of which were distributed to kindergartens across the occupied Palestinian territory. It is also working with the Ministry on legislation related to eliminating violence in schools. A draft policy and guidelines were piloted in 93 schools run by the Palestinian Authority, private entities and UNRWA in Gaza and Jerusalem in 2009. The draft policy will be finalized on the basis of lessons learned during the pilot, with the goal of extending it to all schools in 2010.

36. Under the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 18 schools benefited from microgrants to improve the quality of education. The Terra Santa kindergarten in Jericho was inaugurated and three schools, in Nablus, Ramallah and Qabatia, were furnished and equipped. Moreover, UNDP constructed additional classrooms in 33 West Bank schools.

Health

37. UNRWA operated 56 health facilities in Gaza and the West Bank, employing over 2,000 staff. The total number of patient consultations in Gaza was 4,070,360, a 5.4 per cent increase compared to 2008. In the West Bank, consultations rose 5 per cent, to 2,020,442, in comparison to 2008. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) continued to provide technical and financial support to four women's health centres in Hebron, and Jabalia and Al Buraj refugee camps located in Gaza. UNFPA efforts to prevent hospital-acquired infections continued in 2009 and infection control committees were activated in all maternity wards in the West Bank. Training in infection control and standard precautions continued in Gaza and, in cooperation with the Directorate of Hospitals, UNFPA completed the training in emergency obstetric care protocols for all Ministry of Health maternity workers in the West Bank and in two maternity wards in Gaza.

38. UNICEF contributed towards sustaining immunization coverage, targeting 120,000 infants with diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus (DPT3-Hib) vaccines (97 per

cent coverage), and reaching over 51,000 pregnant women with two doses of tetanus toxoid. The polio, measles and tetanus elimination targets and goals have been maintained with zero reported cases over the past five years. With UNICEF interventions towards improving community and family health-care practices, 228 health-care providers in Gaza and the West Bank were trained in integrated management of childhood illnesses, which is a life-saving, holistic approach to caring for sick children. Micronutrient supplementation was provided to 651 maternal and child health clinics across the occupied Palestinian territory, together with basic growth monitoring and laboratory micronutrient measuring equipment.

39. The World Health Organization (WHO) provided a range of capacity-building and training programmes for the Ministry of Health, and supported the planning and policy capacities of the Ministry's Health Policy and Planning Unit, including in the production and updating of the National Strategic Health Plan. WHO worked with the Ministry to develop a strategy for the prevention, early detection and control of non-communicable diseases, and is supporting the implementation of a longer-term programme for reform of mental health services from an institutional to a community-based model. In addition, WHO assisted the Ministry to prepare the national pandemic preparedness and response plan and the national H1N1 2009 vaccine deployment plan.

40. UNDP, WHO, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNFPA, UNRWA and UNICEF continued to implement programmes under the Global Fund to Combat HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Activities included training of health-service providers in sexually transmitted infections, syndromic case management, advanced HIV care and treatment at antiretroviral therapy sites, and provision of antiretroviral therapy combination therapy, diagnosis, treatment and counselling at health facilities.

41. UNDP started construction works to enlarge two Government hospitals in the West Bank cities of Jenin and Tulkarem, and procured three ambulances to service rural communities. In addition, it constructed three new community mental health centres in the towns of Jenin, Nablus and Halhoul, as well as a documentation centre in El Bireh. Training of mental health practitioners in primary health-care clinics was undertaken for the centres and equipment and furniture were purchased.

Employment

42. The International Labour Organization (ILO) supported the Ministry of Labour in formulating a national labour strategy and contributed towards improved access to labour market information. ILO also worked with the Palestinian Authority in the development of an integrated national policy to promote small- and medium-sized enterprise development, and establishment and operationalization of a legal clinic at the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions to provide legal advice and services to Palestinian workers employed in Israel. In addition, ILO contributed to efforts to develop the capacities of the Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture to become a stronger advocate of employers' organizations and a more efficient private sector representative in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Targeted social assistance

43. The World Bank is implementing a project to improve the living conditions of the poorest and most vulnerable households, and strengthen the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Social Affairs in managing cash transfer programmes. UNRWA distributed 513,314 food parcels and $1.4 million in supplementary cash assistance to nearly 31,400 households through its special hardship case programme. In addition, the UNRWA poverty-based targeting instrument, tested in Gaza in 2008, was expanded to the West Bank. On the basis of the results of this survey, a family income supplement to bridge the abject poverty gap was provided for 10,125 individuals in the West Bank and 69,590 individuals in Gaza. A total of $10.5 million was distributed through this programme.

Culture

44. UNESCO supported the preparation of the first sector strategy for culture within the framework of the culture and development Millennium Development Goal joint programme in the occupied Palestinian territory. UNESCO supported efforts to rehabilitate and adapt the reuse of Khan al-Wakala in the Old City of Nablus, to establish the Riwaya Museum in Bethlehem and to draft the Battir landscape conservation and management plan and its guidelines in Bethlehem.

Food security and agriculture

45. The programmes of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) improved the livelihoods of over 12,900 persons in the West Bank and Gaza through interventions aimed at mitigating the effects of rural poverty and food insecurity, water scarcity, lack of access to agricultural areas and inputs, and high cost of production through the delivery of inputs and technical support. Projects include backyard food production, promotion of aquaculture, home gardening and food processing to generate income, with focus on female-headed households. In addition, FAO implemented programmes to reclaim and rehabilitate destroyed lands to restart food production and provide nutritious food for the market in Gaza. In response to operation "Cast Lead", FAO implemented programmes to assist the most vulnerable farmers and rural households to restore farming-based livelihoods, boost local food production, strengthen the wider economy and improve coordination within the agricultural sector.

46. UNDP is implementing several projects in Gaza and the West Bank, including a comprehensive emergency response programme for rehabilitation of agricultural lands, irrigation infrastructure, the fishery sector and livestock production in the Gaza Strip. The UNDP agricultural development programme also includes a major land reclamation and irrigation infrastructure rehabilitation component in the West Bank which has benefited approximately 2,700 rural households dependent on the agricultural sector. UNIFEM supported the training of 272 women from 10 rural women's community-based organizations in the Hebron and Qalqilya districts in food processing and management. There are currently nine operational production units which have started generating income for their participants.

Human rights, women, children and youth

47. Acting under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Affairs, UNIFEM continued to support the Mehwar Centre, which hosted and protected a monthly

average of 30 women and their children from violence and honour killings. UNIFEM also supported the development of a national strategy to combat violence against women and is working with the Ministry of Women's Affairs to develop the cross-sectoral national gender strategy.

48. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) trained 30 police officers in the provision of child-friendly services, 15 Palestinian judges in international human rights standards and their application, and 21 staff of the Independent Commission for Human Rights in monitoring and reporting human rights violations. In collaboration with the Palestinian High Judicial Council and the Judicial Training Institute of Jordan, OHCHR held a three-day seminar for 15 new Palestinian judges in Jordan on the role of the judiciary in protecting and promoting human rights.

49. In Gaza, UNRWA continued to teach a stand-alone human rights curriculum based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and identified and trained over 200 human rights teachers. In addition, UNRWA worked with the International Committee of the Red Cross, OHCHR and local human rights organizations in curriculum development. Human rights also formed part of the UNRWA curriculum in the West Bank.

50. UNFPA continued to support its national partner's efforts to improve the protection of women and girls from gender-based violence by providing outreach psychosocial support through trained social workers in Nablus, Jenin and Jericho municipalities so as to detect, counsel and refer cases. With ILO facilitation, the National Women's Employment Committee was established. This Committee will serve as an advisory group, promoting women's employment activities, providing protection in the workplace and integrating women's employment within existing strategies for gender-responsive employment opportunities. WHO planned and implemented the first of a series of workshops for the Ministry of Health on health and law, with special attention to difficulties in accessing East Jerusalem hospitals.

51. UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Youth and Sports to develop a database of youth services and trained 122 Ministry staff in all districts. UNDP developed a pilot project for a Palestinian Youth Sports League, which is a community-based national sports programme designed to provide youth, adolescents and children with a safe and competitive sporting environment. The League, to be launched in April 2010, aims to promote positive role models among young Palestinians and to encourage social and corporate responsibility in the community. The FAO Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools project was implemented in 26 schools throughout the West Bank and Gaza, benefiting 1,200 boys and girls by using agriculture as a backdrop for life lessons.

Environment

52. The World Bank is addressing immediate and impending health, environmental and safety hazards to communities in the Beit Lahia area of northern Gaza. The goal is to find a long-term solution for the adequate treatment and disposal of wastewater in northern Gaza, which entails construction of a new wastewater treatment facility. Approximately 300,000 people living in northern Gaza will benefit from this project.

53. The World Bank is contributing to the development of a sustainable institutional structure of the water and wastewater sector in Gaza, including through strengthening the regulatory and institutional capacity of the Palestinian Water Authority. UNRWA continued to provide essential support to those delivering basic utility services in Gaza, such as water, sewage pumping and solid waste collection and disposal. UNDP is supporting the capacity-building of relevant ministries and civil society organizations to adapt to climate change challenges in the short and long term and to integrate climate change coping mechanisms in the National Development Plan.

54. The ongoing Southern West Bank Solid Waste Management Project of the World Bank, which will benefit approximately 600,000 people in Bethlehem and Hebron governorates, will provide an efficient, socially acceptable and environmentally friendly mechanism for the improvement of solid waste management. The project will also build the capacity of the Joint Services Council and the Environmental Quality Authority.

55. The United Nations Environment Programme undertook a post-conflict environmental assessment to examine the natural and environmental impacts on the Gaza Strip caused by operation "Cast Lead", and an economic evaluation of the cost of environmental rehabilitation and restoration.[6] Discussions are ongoing on the implementation of the recommendations.

B. United Nations system emergency assistance

56. Through the consolidated appeals process for 2009, an appeal was made for $803 million, which was 75.8 per cent funded. The Humanitarian Response Fund was used to fill urgent funding gaps and respond to unforeseen humanitarian needs in Gaza and the West Bank, especially in area C and the seam zone.

Emergency construction

57. UNDP and UNRWA succeeded in clearing more than 293,000 tons of rubble from more than 1,000 sites and crushed 150,330 tons of rubble. Crushed rubble is currently being reused in small-scale infrastructure projects, such as road rehabilitation. The operation is expected to be completed in December 2010.

58. The United Nations Mine Action Team explosive ordnance removal teams assessed 1,632 sites (882,571m^2) in preparation for rubble removal and rehabilitation of road projects. Support for explosive ordnance disposal by the mine action team uncovered 343 items of unexploded ordnance, of which 171 were found during rubble removal activities.

59. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) started the construction of buildings and infrastructure works for the first phase of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz City for Charity Housing in Hebron. The project aims to improve the living conditions of poor women and their families by constructing 100 housing units and establishing small-scale enterprise activities to generate income for poor female-headed households in Hebron.

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[6] United Nations Environment Programme, *Environmental assessment of the Gaza Strip following the escalation of hostilities in December 2008-January 2009*.

Emergency income generation

60. UNRWA provided temporary employment for around 77,000 persons in Gaza and the West Bank, creating over 3.5 million days of employment, equivalent to almost 15,000 full-time jobs. UNDP is implementing a programme for 50,000 people that provides emergency livelihood support, utilizing emergency job creation schemes in such areas as solid waste management, agriculture and fishery. In addition, the UNDP Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme provided income-generation activities for 723 families in Gaza.

Emergency food and agriculture support

61. The World Food Programme (WFP) interventions reached 395,000 vulnerable and food-insecure non-refugee Palestinians in the West Bank and 377,000 in Gaza. Over 68,300 metric tons of food commodities were distributed (37,000 in Gaza, 31,300 in the West Bank). In Gaza 92,000 schoolchildren were provided with school snacks and, in the West Bank, this programme reached 63,000 children in primary schools and kindergartens.

62. WFP launched an urban voucher project in the West Bank which assisted 5,500 vulnerable urban households affected by high food prices. The project provided a financial stimulus to the local economy, as the vouchers are redeemed in shops against locally produced commodities. WFP launched the voucher project in Gaza in November for 2,300 urban households and implemented a joint assistance programme with UNRWA for 36,000 vulnerable Bedouin communities in area C. FAO supported an estimated 2,500 poor herder families with emergency assistance in the same communities.

63. UNRWA increased its emergency food aid rolls in Gaza from 550,000 to 900,000 refugees. However, from the end of March 2009, the Agency reduced its emergency food aid caseload in Gaza to approximately 650,000 refugees. UNDP and UNRWA provided financial support to thousands of families whose homes were destroyed or sustained damage during operation "Cast Lead".[7] Both agencies are providing $5,000 to families whose shelters were completely destroyed and $3,000 for those that suffered major damage and are compensating the value of actual repairs of houses that sustained minor damages.

64. In the West Bank, UNRWA provided emergency food aid to around 60,000 families. Special focus was placed on communities affected by the barrier and living in area C, as well as those in East Jerusalem, which continued to face the risk of internal displacement. UNRWA provided $54,646 as cash assistance to address the immediate material needs of 32 refugee families affected by forcible evictions, home demolitions and other damages to private property caused by hostilities and violence.

Emergency health support

65. WHO, with health cluster partners, carried out assessments of health needs in Gaza in February and July 2009, and supplied medicines, disposables and

[7] According to assessments conducted by UNDP and UNRWA, 2,202 refugee shelters and 1,223 non-refugee shelters were completely destroyed during the war, while a further 1,689 refugee shelters and 1,154 non-refugee shelters sustained major damage and 43,996 refugee shelters and 10,804 non-refugee shelters sustained minor damage.

equipment, and logistical support to the central drug stores and support departments in the main Gaza hospitals. WHO is implementing a project to improve the quality of maternal and newborn health care in Gaza, initially targeting the main hospital facilities. The project is expected to raise standards of care and improve related health outcomes, such as infant mortality and morbidity, reducing disabilities, obstetric complications and maternal mortality.

66. With the Ministry of Health and UNRWA, UNICEF conducted a catch-up measles, mumps and rubella campaign that reached 117,000 students in grades 7 and 9 who had been missed in earlier rounds. UNICEF established four therapeutic feeding centres for moderate to severely malnourished children and provided micronutrient supplies for six months.

Emergency water and sanitation support

67. UNICEF provided tankered water to 135 schools and 8 learning centres, benefiting at least 112,500 students and 5,000 teachers. One well was drilled in Al Moghraqa, making available safe water to approximately 40,000 residents, while rehabilitation and extension of water networks increased access for an additional 30,000 residents in northern Gaza. Six small desalination units have been installed near wells across Gaza, benefiting 30,000 people, and two large desalination units currently being installed will reach 20,000 more residents. Throughout the West Bank, water and sanitation facilities were renovated in 23 marginalized schools, benefiting over 8,000 students and around 200 teachers.

C. United Nations system support to Palestinian institutions

68. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Affairs, UNICEF facilitated negotiations related to 28 child protection-focused amendments to the Child Law of 2004. The amended Law was approved by the Council of Ministers in 2009 and awaits the President's endorsement. Working with the Ministry of Finance, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) introduced the automated system for customs data project. The system, which is now being used in all customs offices in the West Bank, will simplify customs procedures and facilitate trade through online processing, making it faster and cheaper for Palestinian exporters and importers to conduct transactions.

69. The World Bank's Palestinian non-governmental organization project has already successfully increased the capacity of Palestinian non-governmental organizations to carry out social service delivery activities. In its third phase the project has supported the transformation of the Project Management Organization, the implementing unit within the Welfare Association of the previous projects, into the Non-Governmental Organization Development Centre, an institution dedicated to grant-making and sector development. At the same time, the project will provide funding to develop and sustain specific social service delivery activities sponsored by non-governmental organizations.

70. The World Bank is supporting the Palestinian Authority's implementation of the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan by strengthening the Authority's fiscal position and improving public financial management. The World Bank's municipal development programme is supporting municipalities in their capital investment and services positions, and supported municipal innovations and

efficiency by promoting amalgamation, energy savings and responsiveness to citizens. In addition, the World Bank is supporting small communities in planning local initiatives and prioritizing needs through an inclusive and participatory process by providing small grants to support joint activities among several village councils for subprojects that were part of the local plan.

71. UNDP continued to support the capacity development of the High Judicial Council and the Attorney-General's Office as well as institutional development of the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministries of Planning and Administrative Development, Foreign Affairs and National Economy, and the General Personnel Council. The UNDP multi-year comprehensive programme, "supporting the rule of law and access to justice for the Palestinian people 2009-2012", approved in 2009, aims to implement interventions to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Palestinian justice system and improve access to justice.

72. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) provided support, mainly through the Ministry of the Interior, to the Palestinian civil police, civil defence and presidential guard, and built capacity in project development within the civil police by continuing the Programme Steering Committee. UNOPS also supervised the design and construction of three major infrastructure projects in the West Bank.

73. The World Bank is providing funding for infrastructure rehabilitation and maintenance to help mitigate further deterioration in the delivery of essential municipal services and created an estimated 237,181 direct temporary employment opportunities and 36,325 indirect temporary employment opportunities. In addition, it is supporting the adoption of appropriate sectoral efficiency enhancement measures and the key performance indicators of electricity distribution utilities, including improved collection performance.

74. In 2009 UNRWA signed a memorandum of understanding with the Palestinian Monetary Authority for its microfinance department to join the new national credit registry. UNRWA participation in the registry accounts for 10 per cent to 13 per cent of all new credit facilities opened each month by 20 commercial banks and three microfinance institutions with branches in the occupied Palestinian territory, although its loans account for less than 2 per cent of the value of credits.

D. Private sector development

75. UNCTAD support for the Palestinian private sector involved provision of advisory services to the Palestinian Shippers' Council (www.psc.ps) to assist it in launching new services to its members and the Palestinian community of importers and exporters at large. UNRWA financed 12,000 loans valued at $19.73 million for Palestinian microenterprises and households. While the West Bank portfolio grew by 20 per cent (9,500 loans valued at $16.06 million), credit outreach in Gaza shrunk to 2,400 loans valued at just $3.67 million owing to the closure. Despite the situation in Gaza, UNRWA was able to cover 126 per cent of its running costs of $3.69 million from its credit operations.

76. The World Bank co-funded grants to more than 200 Palestinian businesses in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in Gaza valued at $3 million. The grants aim at assisting enterprises to expand into new markets locally, regionally

and internationally, encouraging firms to develop new and improved products, promote first-time exporters, build the local market for business development services and gather data on local obstacles to growth.

E. Coordination of United Nations assistance

77. Efforts to streamline United Nations coordination mechanisms continued throughout the reporting period, with regular structured meetings of the United Nations country team and of strategic area groups established under the United Nations medium-term response plan. This enabled a more focused engagement with external coordination mechanisms, such as the local aid coordination structure comprising the Palestinian Authority, donors, United Nations agencies and civil society; the humanitarian country team; and the Office of the Quartet Representative. Streamlining United Nations coordination has helped to ensure that the operational work of the Organization reinforces its higher-level policy positions and interventions.

78. The humanitarian country team met regularly to address pertinent humanitarian issues and to agree on advocacy messages and response. In Gaza, the Operational Coordination Group and the humanitarian cluster/sector working groups continued to coordinate humanitarian assistance provided by the United Nations and international agencies.

IV. Donor response to the crisis

Budgetary and fiscal support

79. In 2009 donors provided around $1.3 billion towards direct budget support.[8] The budgetary external financing requirements for 2010 are projected at $1.2 billion, down from $1.35 billion in 2009 and from $1.8 billion in 2008, reflecting what Prime Minister Fayyad has termed as an effort to secure reduced reliance on the international community. However, in January 2010 approximately $50 million only was received and approximately $60 million only in February 2010. Without adequate and timely donor assistance, the Palestinian Authority is likely to face serious liquidity difficulties. Predictability in funding is essential to allow the Authority to plan accordingly so as to ensure adequate financing in 2010.

Donor coordination

80. The humanitarian donor group met regularly and the group, in turn, met on a regular basis with the humanitarian country team to discuss and coordinate key humanitarian policy issues. In addition, the biweekly meetings, co-chaired by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, provided an opportunity for the humanitarian community to share information with donors about the latest humanitarian trends and updates on

[8] The biggest contributors include the United States of America ($3 million), Saudi Arabia ($2 million), EU through the PEGASE mechanism (mécanisme palestino-européen de gestion de l'aide socio-économique) ($4 million), the United Arab Emirates ($2 million) and contributors to the World Bank's Trust Fund (a total of $1 million).

the political situation to ensure partners reflect the priorities and concerns of humanitarian actors in their dealings with the relevant Israeli and Palestinian authorities, and support a common approach within the international community.

81. Two meetings of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee were held. The Joint Liaison Committee, a tripartite coordination mechanism including the Government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and representatives of the international community, was revitalized at the local level to monitor progress towards agreed areas.

82. In close collaboration with the Palestinian Authority and UNDP, the Office of the Special Coordinator initiated and organized a series of workshops and training sessions on aid effectiveness for the Palestinian Authority, donors, civil society and the United Nations country team to build wider knowledge of and familiarity with the principles enumerated in the Paris Declaration, and to use those principles to strengthen the delivery of development assistance.

V. Unmet needs

83. The 2010 consolidated appeals process calls for $664.4 million for 236 humanitarian and early recovery projects in the areas of food security, agriculture, protection, education, health, water and sanitation, and coordination and support services. As of 20 April, funding stood at 19.4 per cent.

84. In January, the Palestinian Authority released the priority interventions document for 2010, entitled "Palestine: moving forward, priority interventions for 2010", which is organized around four principles: building local Government institutions; upgrading public service delivery; establishing strategically significant infrastructure; and improving foreign relations of the Palestinian Authority. Of the total budget of approximately $5.5 billion, 51 per cent of the priority projects in the document are not yet funded. In addition to supporting the projects identified in the document, the United Nations will continue to implement capacity development programmes and projects in key priority sectors, in particular water and sanitation, education, shelter and reconstruction, in both the West Bank and Gaza. In its support for these activities, the United Nations has agreed with the Palestinian Authority to the establishment of a trust fund to support the United Nations work.

VI. Challenges

85. The closure of the Gaza Strip continued, despite recent approval of a broader range of goods to enter the Strip, as mentioned earlier in the present report. In the West Bank, despite the easing of some obstacles, movement and access continued to be restricted, and settlement expansion and house demolitions continued, as did restrictive planning and permit processes in area C. As affirmed by the Quartet in Moscow on 19 March 2010, a durable solution is required to the issues of security, Palestinian unity and crossings in accordance with the Agreement on Movement and Access of 2005. There was also a lack of progress in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and Palestinian reconciliation efforts. These factors have impacted the development of the Palestinian economy as well as the delivery of international assistance.

VII. Conclusions

86. The operational context for the United Nations in the reporting period led to the re-orientation of its work to support Palestinian State-building efforts as a critical complement to the continued response to humanitarian needs. Humanitarian and development efforts are an essential component of the creation of a Palestinian State as part of the two-State solution, but are no substitute for the progress which must also be made on the political track. The United Nations will continue working towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009), an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the establishment of a sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian State, existing side by side in peace with a secure Israel.